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W. D. Longstaff
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"Pencil Journal of a Naturalist
SFA Corpus Christi, Texas
March 14 – Aug. 28, 1884

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Pencil Journal of a Naturalist. (S.F.A.)

March 1884
Sunday

Corpus Christi, Texas. I arrived here at 8. P.M. March 14. 1884. Town differs from the few other towns I have passed through in being a little less Mexican. There are fewer adobe houses, and there seems to be less Mexican bravado and cowboy appearance of its inhabitants. There is, however, a Mexican quarter, (or half, perhaps) and many of the citizens have the usual fancy hats and spangles. There are also abundant cattle men and dashers. The rest of the inhabitants are cosmopolitan, from everywhere, and some from nowhere in particular, here on keep 'em. The Northerners represent I believe the most capital and energy, though not a great deal of either. The town has a spic & span appearance however and is a pleasant place, situated directly on the bay of the same name and the salt air is invigorating. A bluff, erosive, skirts the bay for miles and a part of the town is above, part below (the better part) the bluff. On all sides are the broad prairies. The town has one brick building, (the bank) two hotels, a fire dept, volunteer with a paid engineer, and a large dance pavillion at the upper end on the beach. Oysters and fish are as common here, taken out of the bay, as the clay in the streets. (The ground is mostly sand.) In the town streets and on the houses there are great numbers of blackbirds and jack daws. The former make little more

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but the latter have a squawk like a combined whistle, shreiek and scrape, not unlike a musical gate hinge and then the performer struts about and strikes attitudes. Along the bay are numerous water birds, terns, gulls, ~~otter~~ egrets, wild ducks, curlew, sandpipers, willet, stilts, avocets, each in considerable and totally in great numbers.

I have seen many species of butterflies, many Hesperidae, and in the surf, washed in, specimens of Anthocharis genutia(?). I think. These were probably washed down from the river at high tide. Seaweeds, beautiful shells, and sea cabbages are plentiful along the coast, also fiddler and racing crabs that run sideways and so rapidly as to be astonishing. I have seen many species of butterflies, mostly Hesperidae, also Pieridae and a few Papilios. There are two long wharves extending out into the bay, one for loading freight only and belonging to the R.R. (the Mex. National from New Laredo to Corpus Christi, a narrow gauge, one train a day affair) and the other a better wharf owned by the Morgan line of steamships. (Vera Cruz to N.Y.)

March 17. Down the shore below the bluffs for 2 ½ miles, collecting & gunning. Shore alive with birds: Sea gulls, terns, godwits, snipe, sandpipers, ducks &c. Shot some red head ducks as they rose from a sand bar 30 yds away. No 8 shot. I brought home and identified the following: Stilt sandpiper, Wilson's plover, sing billed gull, and Forster's tern. Saw many of and shot one scissor tail flycatcher. Caught many species of butterflies, a few moths, and a miscellaneous lot of insects, mostly Coleoptera. Most of the butterflies were taken within the extensive gaps or gullies (called arroyas) that cut for considerable distances into the bluffs, sometimes for a quarter of a mile or more and near the shore in their deepest places look like miniature canyons. These are full of flowers and are out of the miscreant wind and prove a safe harbor & attraction for the fragile winged insects. I got: Synchloe jamaia, common, Tintneria Jampa, species of Pyrgus, Thanaos, Pamphila, Amblyscirtes (Hialis &c) Copeodes proxima, several Eudamus, Melitaea, Eretria, Lycaena Theda and one species of Neonympha allied to areolatus. Also Junonia Lavinia.

March 22. Shooting over flats north of town. This is the famous "Ruins" or corner, where Gen'l Taylor thought he trapped the Mexican detachment, who, though greater in number than Taylor's men, only sought to escape. In the morning the Mexicans were gone and it was found they had crossed the wide bay, by a narrow, winding and continuous oyster reef. Shot and identified several birds and others that I knew: Shore lark, Ruddy plover, Franklin's gull, Savanah sparrow, titlark or pipit, Texas cardinal. Took some butterflies also. Found trails of animal with large claws but could not follow it on the hard ground; Probably a badger.

March 23. Took Nathalia isle, Colias keewaydin and many other insects; including Odonata. Became aquainted with a Mr Hanevole from Chicago, a collector of birds + eggs for the Ridgeway Club of Chicago. He is a great blow, and pretty ignorant and I am sorry he is not more congenial.

March 25 to 27.

Became aquainted with a Mr Priour, the greatest hunter in all this region and famous as a plainsman throughout the Western Portion of the State. He is a typical Texan, rough, good natured, jolly, devil may care. He is 6 ft. 2" sandy hair & blue eyed and knows nature like an open book. With him and Hancock these three days, 25 & 27 were spent in trip to the wild open prairies south of Corpus. To get to this section we crossed the Nueces Bay by the oyster reef before mentioned. It is a ford three miles long, by way of winding about, the bay is 2 miles wide. In no place did we go deeper than the wagon hubs and the reef is marked by stakes every 25 yds or less. It was surprising to see the horses, when we got out several hundred yds from the shore, put down heads and drink. But here the Nueces River current flows out strongly through the salt water and does not mix with the latter readily. Many water birds in the shallows about the bay, gulls, terns, ducks, herons egrets &c. It was most interesting to watch the great blue herons standing like statues & watching for fish. Mr Priour says they seldom miss when they strike. The birds stand perfectly motionless for as long as you may care to watch them,

but when they see a fish the long beak comes down with wonderful swiftness and accuracy. We saw a Royal tern catch a fish and then throw the fish into the air and catch it again and again, in order to get it head first and to swallow it.
On the road again we saw the little spotted grand squirrel or Spermophile and I shot and made a skin of it. After travelling all the afternoon, seeing lots of birds, getting sand storms, and having our eyes wide open generally through a wild & varied country, we made camp in a bunch of trees by the way and prepared for the night. These groves are called Motts, from the Mexican word Motte, a grove and are of several kinds; such as motte paloblanco, (grove of white trees or live oaks) motte algeroba, (the mesquite) &c. These motts are live oaks and they exist on the prairie always in small groves, twisted and gnarled by the ever incessant gulf winds and devoid of the usual hanging southern moss which is common elsewhere in more sheltered places. The mesquite grows everywhere, only occasionly forming groves of larger trees, but great forests of it cover large areas, the growth not more than waist or head high, sometimes knee high. This is the over

for wild cats, foxes, skunks, snakes &c. The cattle eat this mesquite, the tenderer foliage and keep it down and sometimes they say prairie fire kills it down during extended drouths. Cattle in large herds, wild looking, long horned, unimproved breeds, graze over the prairie. They are much afraid of folks but they will chase a dog and dont seem to mind a wagon, cant pick the people out of the wagon any more than can a hawk. Some long horned and vicious looking brutes charged on our dog, Flora, who promptly retreated under the wagon. Mr Prim urged me to jump out to see how they would frighten and I'll confess for a moment I was slow to do so, though he nor Hancock didn't suspect why. But when I did jump out there was a scattering of long horns, they ran away like deer.

After supper we slipped on canvas breeches, took guns and followed Mr Prim to a motte about a mile away just at nightfall after turkey. Got no turkey, though we had heard them gobble in the vacinity and one here left the roost. They roost in the live oaks and Prim knows these places. As we advanced slowly and spread out toward the roost a large bird flew from a tree and swiftly crossed the narrow patch of sky toward the open prairie I had my gun up, but no aim, Hancock

admitted he didn't think of his gun, but Mr Prior shot and killed the bird. This was the best shot I ever saw made and I wouldn't have believed it possible. The bird was a great horned owl and its presence here kept the turkeys away, Mr Prior said. Hancock raved over the owl as a specimen, it might have been a new species, the way he talked. I laughed at him & made him mad; but he got over it after a little. We returned to camp and turned in to sleep, in the open air, only a blanket below and above us. Hancock had an extra shawl which he kept to himself, & the manner with which he did this, more than the act itself, disgusted me and I think Prior also, though the latter was much too polite to show it. In the night we were somewhat disturbed by cattle bellowing near us, and whenever we wakened a mockingbird was singing in the trees overhead. Several times we heard, far in the distance, the barking or baying of the big gray wolves, or "lobers" as they are called here, the Mexicans giving the V sound to the b. In the morning I collected insects over the prairie, getting some interesting things, but the high winds prevented the taking of good specimens of butterflies and moths. I was cautioned not to get lost, as

everything looks alike on the prairie, but I had no trouble in returning direct to camp from a mile or so out. Returning I encountered a large range bull, an enormous fellow, king of his herd no doubt. When the herd saw, cows, calves and all, at my approach, stood his ground under a live oak tree and threatened me, even advancing a little with lowered head and a bellowing more like thunder than I ever heard before from a bull. But I didn't accept the challenge; I reasoned that a 38 smith + wesson and a butterfly net weren't up to the occasion, so I made a wide detour and left him satisfied no doubt.

In the afternoon we drove on to the house of the Ranch, owned by Cole, Fullerton and Co. There are some 300,000 acres of land, and one way it is 35 miles across the ranch. They own thousands of cattle and hundreds of horses and mules. We filled our water keg at the ranch, out of the big wooden cisterns that catch rain water for drinking purposes, all the well water in these parts being brackish, except artesian water and sometimes that is. Mr Cole is a pleasant fellow, young and a New Yorker, but likes the life out here best. He showed us a brace of fine gray hounds that he crosses rabbits with and an English bull dog that can throw a steer. This dog however was badly

cut up by a coyote that he failed to vanquish. I learned of one visit from Cold Foot one of the riders stands two hours to saddle. The first one was a tartar, far worse than any one expected. The Quarter was a hundred beast turned out with a colt with the mare and lately down into the corral with a hundred pint like it, all wild as deer. Two men on foot passed the beasts in review and threw them, then tied, saddled and bridled them, let them up and after they bucked and riffed around a bit, brought them forward, one at a time, in jumps and bounds, to the big gate. The rider climbed out on the overhead beam, hung down and dropped into the saddle. The man let go the horse and the poor beast was so astonished that she stood for a little still. Then he bounded off a little and commenced bucking and leaping in a way that looked to me as if he'd throw the man any moment stay right. Every time the horse jumped the man cut him with a quirt. The rider was a cowboy, but it was a cruel thing and the mad horse was terribly punished. I don't know how long it kept up. I was so excited that it may have been an hour, or only five minutes, but the horse finally quieted down, only making motions as if it

would go on bucking, and twisting from side to side when struck but finally giving up all together and standing with head hung down, so that the cow boy got off and on its back without its doing more than flinching. Then the rider sat down under a tree to rest and I noticed his nose and mouth were bleeding but I dont know somewhat-cause, and neglected to ask. The others horse only ran about and bucked very little & was soon tamed. Mr Cole gave us permission to hunt & shoot wherever we wished and we left the Ranch. Out some distance, a mile or more on the prairie, we saw a flock of snow geese, perhaps a hundred or more, feeding like domestic geese and looking just like them, only there was a something that proclaimed them wild. All were white except one individual and this seemed as black as a crow. Mr Preuss took one of the horses out of the wagon, bent over alongside of it and away from the flock and driving the horse forward slowly he walked right up to within 30 yds of the flock, then stepped out behind the horse and as the birds rose he shot the black one. Hancock was enthusiastic and pronounced the black bird a new species, though it is a well known melinitic form. He gets horribly mixed regarding the families, genera, species &c. Upon Preuss urging I took the horse and repeated the little act, shooting a

fair Lake geese with keel boat after actually
driving the entire fleet with the light, a little
excited, I guess. This time the birds flew
half a mile away before settling.
Toward evening we made camp at mud flats,
a large inlet from the Assiniboine bay;
extending, with its wide arrogance back a
mile or more, and damned off to exclude
the sea water at high tide and to confine the
basin water, thus making a fresh water lake
out of a salt bayou; for watering cattle. It
is a wild place. The nearest habitation is at
twelve miles and in the time of water fowl.
Prince and I shot red head ducks for supper,
I getting mine on overhead shot so that the
bird in falling nearly hit me. Early next
morning I got two more ducks, and later,
with the Winchester went for jacks & rabbits. The
bunnies were plentiful, feeding on the fine
green grass growing about the lakes.
caught several out on a peninsula several
hundred yds. long and shot at them as they
ran past, missing all but one and he
turned two complete somersaults and lay
15 ft from where the bullet struck him.
The rest of this day we spent in collecting
birds and eggs for Hancock, and I got
some insects. Handcock expected the rest
to do most of the work, while he made

alone and their eggs. We delayed us over a turtle doves nest which I found on the ground, and as we had passed it at very common, insisted that we go back a mile or so, said he wouldn't miss it for a hundred dollars and such. I got sick of him then and didn't help them any more, but Mr Prince was good natured. There started wild Turkey, three big birds, out of the brush several hundred yds away. It was a sight. They sailed away over the mesquite for a long distance. We also saw some deer crossing the prairie 300 or 400 yds off and Mr Prince shot at them with his colts 44. They skinned out and disappeared. We saw nest of bald eagle, gt. horned owl, caracara buzzard and several hawks, all in the tops of mott trees, made of sticks &c. That of the bald eagle very large. Not only the eggs of the caracara, too early for the others, though I had supposed the owl laid first of all.

We reached Corpus at 9 oclock, coming from Mud flats by a different road and crossing the bay mid after dark, so that we could hardly see the statues on the reef. The water is beautifully phosphorescent, showing around the wheels and the horses feet.

Mr Prince and I are going again and alone in the near future.

March 29. Out early. Tramp down the bluff with the boys of this town. Climb. Shoot. Bring home and bring gulls. Afternoon: Headquarters plowed and two fields sowed and covered down for winter crops, oats & rye. Excellent. Collect fossils. Foundations of a tavern on the beach. Three eggs in small basket. Bird with a little green. Find a cavity in an abrupt opening through the bluff, a natural bridge in miniature, 15 or 18 inches wide or long. This little structure, though composed of clay, rivals in perfect as the giant one of Virginia. Examining it closely it is very apparent how it is formed. Hairpin explanation (in lecture) is absurd. The drawings here explain themselves:

Natural Bridge.

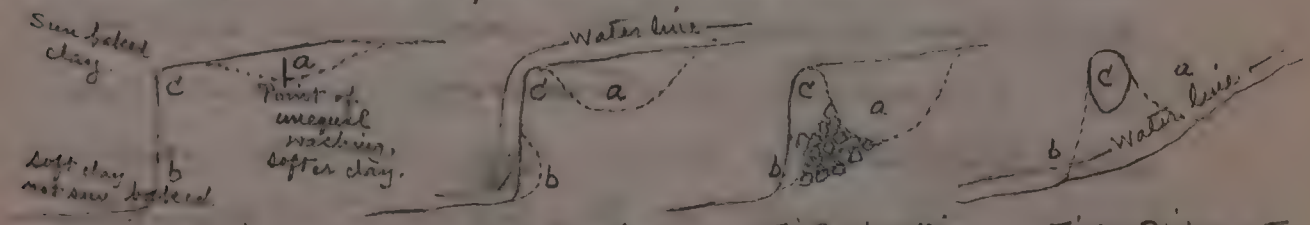


fig 1. Side view of falls in gulley.

Fig 2. Continued erosion.

Fig 3. Crumbling of soft wet clay while drying.

Fig 4. Bridge, water flowing under after washing out crumbled clay.

Examination proved the clay to be harder at c than at A or B., hence the washing out more rapidly of these places. The falls keep washing back until they reach a hard clay strata and then the bridge forms. The clay readily crumbles between a and b during dry spells and is easily washed away by the next rushing water, the hard clay does not crumble, or very little. Further search for a mile or so

thought to light several of these bridges, one 4 ft. long and 5 ft. high, that bore my weight. Others I found in a state of formation and these all bear out the foregoing explanation in every detail. It is indeed very simple and plain. I have no doubt that the great natural bridges of Virginia and California were caused in much the same way.

Hyaenas [illegible] very common. While exploring a gully several colored men, with large dogs, passed down it, hunting wild cats. The dogs started one soon afterward and ran him down near me and then lost him as could not follow him in the thorny chaparral. I tried to get a sight of the cat and I probably turned the beast and he went into the brush. This chaparral is so thick that it is hard to see how even a rabbit or small wild cat can penetrate it. I am told of thousands of acres covered densely and wherein no man has ever set foot. A far greater majority of the plants here seem to have some defence, as thorns &c. One can hardly lie down anywhere on the ground without getting up again hurriedly, with a thorn or burr making love to some anatomy. It isn't good pleasant ground, any of it.

April 2. Loaded & started in the morning at 11 o'clock and to the Arroyo, but still windy.

April 3. Yesterday, while waiting for the wagon to get [illegible] of the Arroyo, I went to the Mexican part of town & bought a dressed sheep, a chicken, a pig, lying just inside the door, and three ducks, all dressing there. The women were cleaning the cooking wood down just inside the door. — Insects fairly plentiful.

April 9th to 12th Camping trip up Nueces River with Dr. Power. Second day's camp in heavy bottoms. The trees are mostly pecans, tall, straight, covered with Spanish moss, which hangs in great festoons, often nearly to the ground. The bottoms are overgrown with palmetto, often ten feet high, more often 5 and 6 feet, sometimes 12 ft. The scenery is tropical and beautiful. Thousands of cords of drift-wood have lodged in places, completely bridging the bayou that separates the mainland from a large island, two miles long. Not half a mile from the River are the Deer Man's Lakes, masses of fresh water 5 miles long. On the upper end of these I shot two ducks with one ball from the Winchester, (chance) at 75 yds. Moccasins [illegible] in the deep bottoms, not very progressive, though. I believe this is the variety known as

Paraguay. I killed several, 4 ft long, and got a fine specimen in alcohol, also a rattle snake, a boiing snake, O. says, some lizards, toads &c. At dusk we crossed to the island again and went about half a mile to a large tumbay roost dead trees in a comparatively open space. Prion cautioned me against noise and especially speaking. I shot two big gobblers, one at 60 and the other at about 80 yds, seeing my sights against the sky and dropping on the shadow form in the tree top & pulling trigger at same moment. This was exciting, but murder. In the day time did my best to stalk flocks of Tinamou, going by the sound of gobbling, but without success. They saw me before I saw them every time. Collected many insects, about which see note book. A chaparral cock sat in bush and stared at us in the wagon not forty feet away. We journeyed 25 miles from Caipue. Altogether a delightful trip.

April 20th

Cloudy and drizly for several days past, unpleasant. Today we are having a "norther," the wind howling and the rain falling by spells. Everybody going about in wraps, shawls, extra coats &c. except self. It doesn't seem cold to me, because recently from the North, I suppose. Shirt sleeves are quite warm enough, to the wonderment of the natives.

Sept 11
Sunday

Little warm but very windy. Three Lovely Townspeople, two of whom I had met before, Miss Jonathan from Bath, Pa: Miss Libbie Beaty, Pomeroy and Mr Hanna. The first and last mentioned ages, the ones about 20. They are visiting Linda, music, age &c. after the ordinary Sunday dinner, for the Lehigh Valley. I took them out to Glenn, getting there at 4 and he hitched up and we took a long trip for the day out on the prairie, after which tea, Linda &c; Pleasant chat, singing, and lots of fun and pleasant conversation. A jolly day with pleasant and congenial (gentlemen, quite the contrast to Hancock. Miss Jonathan is down with fever, typhoid-malaria. Got white tailed Prairie Jackrabbit, cottontail, Lonesome Linda, eggs of these and of the Meadowlark. Some Mirage on the prairie. Distant objects seem unnaturally distinct. Hay cocks upside down. The strip of sky between the horizon and the reflection looks like a great body of water, a lake, calm and wide, the reflection appearing like the far shore. Prior says that many a one who has not before seen it has driven for miles towards it hoping to get water. It is a reflection on the rising rays of heat and the atmospheric conditions must be just so to permit it. We drove across a large area of so called "hog wallow". This

correspond to the description of buffalo wallow that I have read about in the Middle West. But I don't believe frogs or buffaloes have a thing to do with them, that would seem preposterous. I imagine they are caused by some unequal soaking and then drying and crumbling of the ground, wherever in that specific place.

April 24 to 26 Camping with Prairie north of Corpus. Didn't like to leave the Phila. collection but they do their mounting, taxidermy with specific theories, must all their birds and I had to gather specimens. The collecting about Corpus is not very good. But it is too cold to collect insects anywhere and too awfully windy. Shot at my first Coyote. Missed at 300 yds. Last view of coyote, the Our night we heard the cry of what I supposed was a great night bird, a sort of weird, coughing complaining cry, but Prairie said it was probably the small leopard cat. What? Next morning Prairie went off horseback and came back and we changed camps and on the way stopped at a motte and he uncovered the dead cat: Had shot it a little while before, with a load of No 1. in his shot gun, making a small round hole in the skull. It was up a tree & about to jump down and home. I don't know the species. Short Tail, white gray color, beautifully spotted. Skinned it, stuffed head with cleaned skull and wrote description of

at Lagunillas Point. Rio Nueces Bank. A sandy shell
Trip, except cat. Returned, as usual, hungry
& fed.

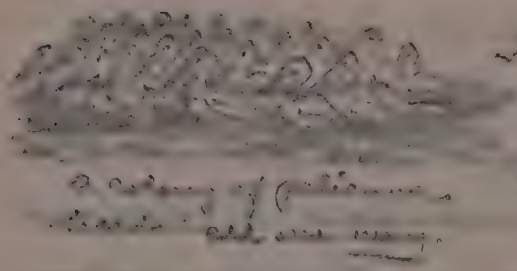
April 25. Not feeling good. Fever and slight chills. Quinine
and a sweat.

May 1. Shooting with Mr Gillen down bay, morning. Went
in spite of having fever. With Gillen & Bennett
in afternoon north of town: Aplin road gallop
headed Alabama. Cool and fine shoot on
sand. Fair shooting, fever gone. Sweat profusely
this eve.

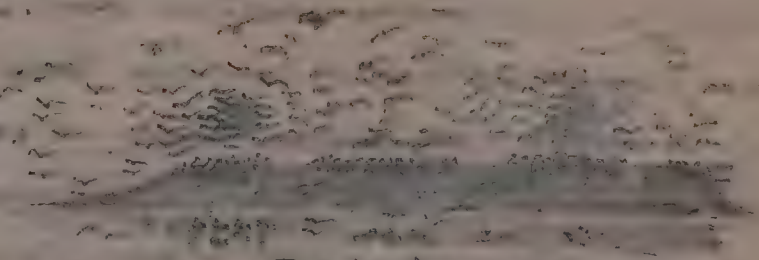
May 8 to 10 Tour, Trip. Ant. With Gillen, Bennett, Prion and Skipper Ben Weinrich in the latters crazy old, flat bottomed sloop, or "box" as the old fellow calls it, to Bird, Pelican and Padre Islands, the latter skirts the coast for 150 miles to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Heavy sea in Bay, Bennett sick. Calm on the Laguna de la Madre, a broad inlet or strip of water between the mainland and the Isla de la Padre. Flour Bluff, the most outer point of mainland, so named because hundreds of barrels of flour destined for Gen'l Taylor's army, were here wrecked and destroyed in storm. Our first landing was Pete's Island where Gillen and self collected over 250 sets of jackdaw eggs in ½ hour. Nests in long grass and low bushes. Next, at lower Bird Island, where many nests of the reddish egret were taken and also a

few specimens of the birds. The young are pure white, appearing like immature birds and making us think they were the white egret. Many were shot that did not fall to be Pearson away. Gillen, Bennett and self in Rubber boots. Nests of sooty tern found by Prain & Skipper Bean. Next landing, mainland where we sighted a hog and Gillen and self went ashore and shot at it with rifles across a small lagoon, "one, two, three." One ball hit it in the foot. The hog ran, Prain came splashing to shore, seized my rifle and killed hog just as it was about to disappear in brush. Gillen & Bennett dragged it to camp, and Gillen cut it up, much to the admiration of Prain and self. It was a young wild boar of large size, and the meat was very strong. Supper and speeches by Bennett, who is studying law at University of Pa. Breakfast some plain, Bennett not quite awake, hence no witty speeches. Next landing, Pelican Island. Abt 700 eggs taken, viz: 500 Pelican, the rest Cormorant and other terns. Thousands of pelicans here, their home during breeding season. The nests are in colonies, 40 or 50 together, some fresh eggs and many young and many addled eggs. Nests are compact, built of dried grass and weeds, raised about 6 or 8 inches from the ground and on the higher parts of the island. How the birds know their nests is a mystery, they are all alike and without regularity. The stench, from guano and rotting

eggs in each hand.



A colony of Pelicans on their way.



Pelican Island, viewed from the point.

The above drawing gives a very faint idea of the immense number of pelicans on this island and flying above and around it. We found some addled eggs and others outside of the nests, (the birds, while not exactly prodigal layers, evidently supply more than enough eggs for hatching) and we annoyed ourselves by throwing these eggs at the birds flying over us, never once hitting them, however. As we advanced through and around the nests the pelicans would leave by hundreds before us, then settle back of us and go on their nests. Can each bird tell its own nest? I very much doubt it and one could not determine this by observation unless a bird were observed with peculiar markings, its nest marked and then watched, but we found no opportunity. At a distance Pelican Island presents a sight almost as remarkable as the view upon it; the thousands of grayish white birds upon, over and around it.

We sailed (partly pulled) over to Padre Island, where we passed the night, covered head and all by blankets to escape if possible from the

very hungry mosquitoes that swarmed about the boat; no doubt breeding in the hold of our old tub. Bennie's eye next morning told of being uncovered part of the time, he said 200 mosquitoes - but that one eye, swore he counted 'em. After breakfast of slapjacks and canned stuff we went in the row-boat to Padre after agreeing to meet the Capn at the upper end of the island, about 3 miles, hoping the old cuss dont get stuck in the sandbars and shallows with his old box. We went straight across the sand dunes and through the low scrub-oaks to the coast side and looked out on the deep blue waters of the gulf, which looked about like any other sort of an ocean, the swells coming in being pretty heavy and capping away up on the shore. another species of crab, (the natives along the Tex. coast call it the "racer"), is common on the oceanside, it runs sidewayse and about as fast as anything can run of like build, I believe it is as fast as the long tailed lizzard and it keeps it up longer. In the scrub oak saw a specimen of wild cat; a little thing, tawny reddish, like a miniature Puma; it trotted away from us up a trail and with a bound was gone before anyone of us remembered we had guns. Pinon didn't see it or he would have got it, no doubt. Mr Gillin half believed it was a domestic cat, but I feel quite certain that it was F. Rufus superior, it was very long tailed and long and low in body. Saw also, just

a fox-cub, a small bob cat, in this direct vic. The tracks of bear and other wild animals and of large birds are quite plentiful and distinct in the fertile sand. Thursday, we dug down in the sand with our hands and in two feet had water that was clear and not salty but had very much of a stagnant, mosquitoish taste. Bird & nest of white tailed hawk was found. The sand dunes are of many peculiar formations. The sand very white and sparkling and mighty hot in the sun, even noticable through thick leather soles. Joining the yacht (?) near the head of the islands, the capin taking me off again in the bateau, we sailed through a long gut or water-way that separates Padre from Mustang Island, (?) or perhaps a smaller island close to Mustang. This gut is very narrow part of the way and very shallow all of the ways, with a thread of a channel near the centre and the Capin had a nearly head wind and no room to go about and the great trial of poling. Part way through Billie and Prior landed in the bateau after ibis &c. and Bennie and I helped the Capin work the old tub through the channel, even at one time getting overboard to push her off of a sand bar and over another, the capin taking down his sail with a bang when we told him it was no use. We surprised the old chap by jumping overboard.

At the very head of the island Prior and Gillen joined us again and we ran to the landing of the Govt observation station on Padre. This is a neat frame cottage and outbuildings, with cisterns, a summer house, a garden, flower garden &c. We went up to the house and Gillen & Benners met the folks while I was engrossed in the collecting of some rare looking snakes in one of the empty cisterns. On coming away a neat, pleasant looking servant girl importuned us to take her to Carpens, while the observation officers wife and another lady insisted that we do not. After consultation we decided we should avoid entanglements, although it seemed a pity to keep the girl a prisoner against her wish. Perhaps if she had been young and very pretty all hands would have favored taking her back to civilization. (?)
On the return across the bay Benners was sick & Gillen on the verge of it: A fine sail, the old tub buffeting the waves and cleaving the water almost like a real boat. This was a trip to be remembered forever.

May 13 14 and 15. Spent in a trip to the Nuces Bottoms with Werner Gillen and Benners. Prior on jury duty, could not go, much against his peace of mind, and Werner and Gillen went with Julian Prior in his wagon and Benners and self took Blacks & Brown. On the way Brown got the cholic and Mr Gillen cured

the bacon with one heroic dose of "snake medicine" brandy that I always carry. (Many birds, eggs, nests and insects collected, also a few reptiles. (We all camped together in our old place. Bowman and Gillian had a special fancy and couldn't walk comfortably. I got up a fruitless tree for a bullbird's avicide nest, put the one egg in my mouth, cut down the nest branch, descended, and smashed the egg in my mouth. It was addled!!! (We all went turkey hunting but without success. Next day in traversing the Palmetto Hammock, Gillian lay down unaccountable error, left his valuable Winchester leaning against a fallen tree and could not find it. This resulted in a general hunt after the alarm was given, Mr Bowman figuring it out mathematically just how the gun could be found. I took a circle about the region where I supposed it to be, narrowed my march each time and found the gun almost at the centre of the circle. On the return trip home Bowman and I got separated from the others who made the town before morning while we had to camp out another night. Bowman insisted that we watch in turns. When he called me I waited till he was asleep good and hard and then called him. He stood up at least two hours by the stove and called me. Then I waited again till he was fast

in slumber and tainted air, not having the heart to make them watch nearly all night. This was a most enjoyable trip. I howled and yelled nearly the entire time at Bennera everlasting afraid and the other mishapes. Once, in coming through the brush we drove face to face into a wasps nest and quit fell out each side of the wagon, fortunately without being stung. Bennera full of topical songs and a fine mimic, he ought to make a good lawyer. We reached Cayuse about 1 oclock, driving slowly, and collecting on the way. Got blue grosbeaks and chuck-will-widow.

May 19. The Phila. ornithologists started home this day and I went as far as Benquete, 25 miles, with them. Last I saw of them all three stood on the rear platform of the train waving at me and I in the middle of the tracks doing the same. I confess a sense of loneliness on parting with these fine, jolly and congenial gentlemen, all and I wish they could have remained here all summer. Stayed at Benquete 4 days, (May 22) had good collecting, insects and snakes, got chased by a range bull and nearly trod on a rattlesnake, put up at the general store and was almost devoured by bed bugs. The store keeper, Postmaster and Station master a morose, but fine looking fellow young, intelligent, probably with a history. We became quite friendly.

June 2 to 18.

These two weeks spent in a Trip of 260 miles (to & fro) to the East Cross Timbers, (at attempt to reach the Brazos River, middle Texas coast). Continual collecting, travelling each day; part of time in the wagon; part on foot; Prior nearly always in the wagon. Every night spent in the Tent, musquitoes bad. Prior a jolly and always entertaining travelling companion, with a fund of anecdote, worthy natural lore, hunting experiences and early Texas Ranger days, in which he played a part. Found a coach whip snake trying to swallow a horned toad, cut the toad out & it ran away unharmed. North of the Arkansas River we got into Prairie hen country and used a few of the cock birds served us for food. They fly steady and straight away and are not hard to hit. Flora loved to flush them. At the Lavaca (The cow) river we attempted to ford over the Sunken remains of a bridge and got stuck in the quick sand, the wagon going down to the hubs until it rested on the Sunken timbers of the bridge, the water coming into the body, the horses rising up to their bellies and nearly drowning. Black struggled out but Brown would have drowned had not Prior sowed the horses more under the water and forced the beast to struggle free of the sand and get to shore. Both horses were so frightened when they got out that they could only

stand with hanging heads and heart hard. Mean Brown got rested, after Prince and I had unloaded the wagon to prevent the things from getting soaked, a job I shall never forget, for we had to step lively to keep from getting mired ourselves. Prior rode two or three miles away to the nearest ranch house where by chance he found a yoke of oxen and returning, after several hours, a chain was hitched to the wagon tongue and three oxen just walked off and the wagon came out of that mud like magic. The whole of this trip has been one long adventure, and most interesting. At St Nicholas Sabine Prince found a nest of young crows in a hollow live oak limb and put his hand in & hauled them out one by one while I stood below and knocked them in the head. Presently he pulled out the old one but not without being beaten in the hand though not badly, and dropping her on the ground I tried to knock her over too but she dodged every blow I made at her and got away in the long grass. Flora wouldn't tackle her at all. Came across a young calf not long hatched that had screw fly larvae in the umbelicus and the mother cow was running around it bellowing and the sight was too pathetic for me so, much against Prince's wish I ended the calf's life with the Winchester. The old cow seemed to associate the gun fire and drop of the calf in some way and charged me but I kept out of her way and she turned her attention to Flora. Found a giant

alligator on the marshy edge of the lake buried in mud almost and ready to snap up anything that came his way. We dont let him be disturbed off of numerous calves, dear boy coming to water. We let him alone and didnt approach him very closely. Found a king snake crawling up the split and perpendicular side of a fence post with nothing to hold on to but the slightly roughened surface. The whole country was covered with water from recent heavy rains between the Nevada and Texana. The water, on a perfectly level prairie, extended for miles and we tramped through it shoe top and knee deep for miles collecting on the high flowering plants &c. Each of the rivers are covered with heavy bottom timber, the trees more living to the ground. At night the tree frogs make such a din that it is impossible to sleep in the forest and their trade may be heard several miles away on the prairie. Mosquitoes were fearfully bad, pestering us continually, even in daytime. They are of many species. Herons along the Nevada River at Texana have extensive heronries, the Tex. night heron, the Louisiana and little blue nesting there. Texana is a deserted town, only one family remaining in a place formerly occupied by perhaps fifty families. The old guy who had an accident

seems to give any reason why the place had become deserted and the reason is not apparent to me, that is I don't see why this place more than another, though how the people exist & hold on to any of these small places is more of a mystery. Of course the larger towns, with railroad connection &c. are trade centers and supply depots for the ranching interests. The neat frame houses, picket fences, grass grown streets and weed grown yards in Texana presented a strange sight. Camped near the town, on a white piece of sand. Camped also on the Colette creek, where I made some fine collections. Beyond the Aransas the fauna and flora seemed to change somewhat, more in general character than in different species, the relative numbers changing. Beyond the Guadalupe I took my first Catocala, and certain butterflies not seen south of it, and scrub oaks replaced the mesquite forests of further South. Heat excessive between the Guadalupe and our turning point, little or no air stirring, thermometer at Victoria registered 112° F during our trip and we must have had it even hotter. Prime got down under the wagon for the shade. We had the horses covered with long wide leaved grass for shade. Flora nearly went crazy with the heat; I collected specimens all day in the sun, and didn't mind it. Prime said he believed it was about 200° in the shade, and no shade. I found Papilio andraia in the sage bushes along the Aransas

house. Took Reptile Salamander commonly at
every place north of the San Antonio.
Returned home in the only rain during the
trip and reached Corpus looking like a
negro, with a beard an inch long.

June 27 to 29 Friday. Sat. Sunday.

Trip to Padre Island, down the Laguna Madre
and out on the Gulf with Preiss and Capt
Collins of the coast survey, in the coast survey
yacht Contesting. Capt. on boat. Rain
much of the time; I did a little collecting. Took
a few Hesperides in a driving rain on Reid Island.
Went cat hunting on Padre for two hours, tracked
the beasts but didn't see a cat long enough to
get a shot. Caught a glimpse of several lynxes
and another cuya. Several times we had to
get overboard and shove the yacht off sandbars.
Went out into the gulf for perhaps fifty miles
and returning ran into a storm. Waves forty
feet high, the little sloop rode them like a
cork. I sat on the bows, legs over gunwale,
wondering if the next wave, higher than a house
would utterly swamp us. Preiss lucky with
eggs, got several species to send Skilton and
Bennore. I slept rolled up in the sail on
the decks of the yacht (cabin roof) and it
rained and I didn't even know it. Nothing
like sleeping on a boat. Lively arguments

with the Capt and Provin on evolution and Christianity. Provin, a catholic in idea rather than practice and the Capt. an old time methodist but not limiting himself in the observance of the church customs and myself rather inclined to be skeptical, we had a truly 3 sided debate. We would have killed a wild cat on Padre if we had had a dog to tree 'em.

July 8 to 14. Nueces River bottoms with Provin, collecting. Fine weather, hot, good collecting, no rain. Killed and collected several moccasins and rattlers. Found complete skeleton of 11 ft. alligator that I had shot on previous trip, even to the bullet hole in the top of the head. The beast had crawled out of the water nearly opposite the place where I had shot it. Why did it do this? Does the suffering cause it to think it is drowning and make it hunt the dry earth?

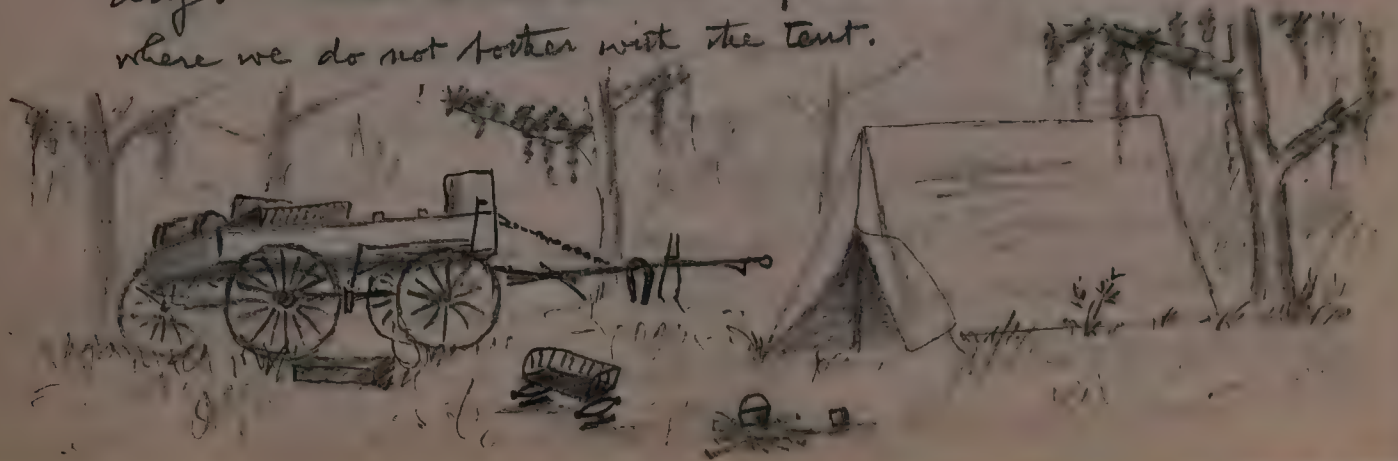
Lived on watermelons and crackers, little meat. Slept and trees at night for mostly with some success, Provin sleeping the while. Heard strange sounds in the dense forests and once the cry of the Panther. It was not an owl. I think I know the cry of all the owls. The great-horned owls are very common here and talk to each other from tree to tree; many would think it horribly mournful but I dont see it that way. I think the strange cry in

the forest, sometimes deafeningly within a few yards of one, more often some distance away, in the way of a raccoon or else the long tailed civet cat. I have heard similar cries in Tennessee, at night in the woods and it is civet cat we found there, I believe.

July 17 Attended Mexican Theatre with Sam Fitzsimmons, a jolly fine, intelligent fellow, son of the local judge. 1st piece tragic, second a comedy. 20 cents between the two was the famous "Kon Kon" and a more immoral thing could be hard to imagine. The costumes & acting were quite good in the plays, the theatre seats are out of doors, the stage alone roofed over.

July 21 to 31 Trip to Colette creek and along the Arroyo river. Dry, few flowers, few birds, little collecting. In the San Antonio bottoms on the return our camp was invaded by a panther; after the prairie chickens hung up on a sapling. I slipped on my shoes, got a winchester and tried to get near enough the beast to see it. But it went off. It evidently tried two or three times to get at Flora but might as well have tried to catch a streak of lightning. The dog carried on terribly and got my nerves quite as much and it is a wonder that I

didn't shoot the dog by mistake. Prouse couldn't find his shoes and spent most of the time cussing. Tracks in moist earth under bride & all about camp looking as my hand, next morning. Prouse got Mississippi Kite and other rare birds on Collette creek. Shot civet cat, went off 25 miles to Harvey, on horseback and was gone over night. Mother possum with little ones clinging to her hair passed into camp and fought the dog & wouldn't play dead. I shot a coyote at 100 yds. from behind house. On the Aransas killed a wild hog that Prouse had wounded in the hind leg. It charged me when I came suddenly upon it in a little clearing and I hit it in the shoulder. Saw two peccaries on canoe trip. Common cat country on Aransas near oak prairies. Cat nests, still warm, observed several times, pines had just left, probably bob cats. Trip a very pleasant one. Few mosquitoes, dry season, they do not last more than two weeks after the last rain, except about water holes and most of these, (natural ones) are dry. Below is a sketch of our camp, all are alike except where we do not bother with the tent.



We suffered most for water part of this time, bog holes, streams becoming dry and the horses got weak and almost refused to go. Could find little food for them also. Poor Prairie cursed and blasphemed 'em but the old black would not track with the horses and refused to get out of a walk. I laughed so hard at Prairie cursing that it a wonder the good natured fellow didn't get angry with me. "There" he'd say, "that d— black hoss is plumb give out again. Go on there you black hided, hop eared, hollow gutted — — — — — — or I'll skin the ole hide clean off ye! Travel! If ye wasn't pindin' travel to it, now." Finally we would come in sight of a bog hole and then there was no holding the horses, and if it had been more thirsty sometimes we would have bogged up, wagon and all, for good and all, like the poor old weak cattle do sometimes.
An all round interesting but not very profitable trip.

Aug 5 to 7 Trip to lower Agua Dulce creek, but did not reach it. When about twenty miles from Corpus, 1st day and after shooting a lot of plover, (great sport) we were overtaken by a cloud burst, the 1st rain of the season. Everything was as dry as punk. Prairie creeks an inch wide and two feet deep. Flora yelled everytime her feet touched the hot sand and

it was mostly hot sand most of the way so that she was in the air about half the time. Finally we had to take her in the wagon where she would remain till she sighted a jack rabbit. Toward evening we were headed for a camping place across a level prairie when the storm came up. It was a small black cloud at first with thunder and lightning; then it came down on us with inevitable speed, spread out at the edges and thickened in the center, and when over us it began to rain lightly and we feared for a downpour. Suddenly there was a tearing, roaring sound, and not a hundred yards away it looked as if the cloud had come down to earth and then this enveloped us and it was no longer raining but the water was falling on us, on everything and the last thing I knew I was drowning on land. I couldn't get breath except with water in it. Provin covered himself with a blanket and Flora stood on her hind feet under the wagon, the horses put their noses down to their chests, Provin said afterward though Prince struggled a lot as if hard pressed, he said. As for me I got my head down under one end of the wagon seat, I was on the ground, and got enough air to do me. It was over in a few minutes and we were only on the edge of it, but I was standing in a foot of water, with water as far as we could see through the misty rain that

formed for a hail. The wagon bed was full and running over the side & soaking the crackers and everything in it was soaked. In a few minutes the water on the ground had disappeared into the dry soil except in the hollow places and everywhere there were sparkling diamonds. About half a mile from us there was a Mexican, his son, over 400 head of sheep, and three, with perhaps a dozen cattle and some pastures. Horses nearby were all drowned, but we didn't hear of it till later. We camped in wet blankets, ate wet food, played poker with wet cards, cleaned our wet guns and collecting outfits and had a damp time generally. Next morning we dried everything in the sun, reloaded & reloaded our shells after drying powder, made tea and in the afternoon shot more plover and headed toward town. Camped in an auto next after dark, didn't undress, just shed our duds, jumped out of them, a garment every jump and two yells to each garment; then scraped autos off. These auto sting like bees but not so badly. Changed camp several yards and examined ground first. Next day shot a little spotted skunk and going to get it it shot me. Hung up clothes in wind to cure, wet some, more wind, repeated several times smell enough gone not to notice while clothes are dry. Further treatment at Cosgrove has

initials cured coat, but will give points away to jackrabbit. Surprised coyote sleeping under mesquite. Shot at him as he ran off, missed, whirled, he stopped and turned and bit him through stomach. Dead when reached him, bullet must have hit bone and split reaching heart or lungs. Saw several deer, one lying down. An interesting and long to be remembered trip, full of incident, the storm the chief incident of course. There was one moment when I was conscious that I was facing the grim monster, for I couldn't breathe anything but water. That was after I had given Prior all the blanket and had jumped out of the wagon to adjust the tent cover over some of the things, a trick that did no good. Just then the "burst" took place and the water was so hard in its downward force that I could hardly stand up under it. Prior said he yelled at me to get shelter but I didn't hear him above the roar of the water. I shouted to him once in anguish between gasps and profanity that I could not breath but he didn't hear me. He was having a hard time himself for about a minute. If I hadn't got my nose under the tent and where the force of the water was broken I would have gone down, I know. But I wasn't really very much frightened. I wasn't prepared for the suddenness of it.

Aug. 8. Day again in, not collecting, nor flowers, everything as dead, apparently, as in Winter time in the north. Grass burned brown, leaves on trees and bushes withered and falling off; even things recover at all, which I suppose they must, in a window.

Aug. 9 to 17. Ten days spent in trip to Monterey, Mexico, via Laredo, on Mex. national road. Laredo like a typical Mexican town, about ⅓ American perhaps. Lampazos, mining town, insignificant, a few long, low adobe houses. Mountains appear on the road, afar in the distance then nearer, then adjacent and only a few miles away. They are imposing, steep, rocky, the tops like saw teeth, individual mts. often peaks. The plain around the mts. is often quite level and sandy, so that the mts appear as if erected thither & piled up instead of being heaved up out of the earth. The country is semi tropical, with much of the vegetation temperate like, much of it tropical, such as the spanish daggers, cacti, agave &c. The houses in the mexican towns, New Laredo, Lampazos, Monterey, are nearly all of adobe, long low, more often one storied, with iron bars in front of every window to keep out robbers. The roofs are often tin clad, often of white hard tile, often not visible. Thatched

roofs are made of bundles of cane, leaves, broad leaved grasses, reeds &c. somewhat woven upon a framework of cane, crossed and tied at the joints. Some of the houses are decorated without in colors like wall papers, some have these designs made by different colored adobes or tiles. Within the houses, enclosed entirely in a court yard, often in the better class dwellings with a fountain or large stone pool, and beautiful flowering plants are everywhere. Each room of the house opens upon this court, under a canopy or extended roof for a few feet. The entrance is a hallway which is similar to the other rooms. The doors are level with the street. The floors are cement and gravel, or flagstone. In the town center are the plazas, the plaza de zaragoza being the finest in Monterey and across from it is the cathedral and many fine public buildings. The plazas have fine wide walks, many fountains and boulders shrubs, palms and flowers. It is very beautiful. The cathedral is two towered and the floor of the main aisle is composed of the top stones of the tombs of the priests &c. who have died here. A good many of them have died, some are reserved for others. In the town very many signs of Botica, meaning drug store. Drugs are evidently much needed by these folks. In

The suburbs have some fine dwellings with large gardens surrounded by high stone fences. There are also beautiful plazas in certain sections where people sell all sorts of produce, and where tortillas, tamales, chili-con-carne, agua calda, peaches, pears, grapes &c. &c can be bought ready for eating. The points of historical interest about the town are the evidences of the American war and the French war. High hills nearly surrounding the town have remains of fortifications on their tops, with some few mutilated looking cannon dismounted and half buried. These belonged to the French. At the west end of the town is the Bishop's palace, on a high hill. It is going into decay, but is now occupied by soldiers as a barracks. This has been a fine building and speaks eloquently of the dandy times the priesthood knew during the period of church and state.

A small river runs through and near the town on one side, it is now almost dry so that one may walk across its bed on the pebbles and cobbles. In winter it often becomes a torrent, they say. I crossed this river bed on my way to the hills and was set on by a dozen dogs coming from the hacienda before me on its banks. I did not want to shoot at them so I armed

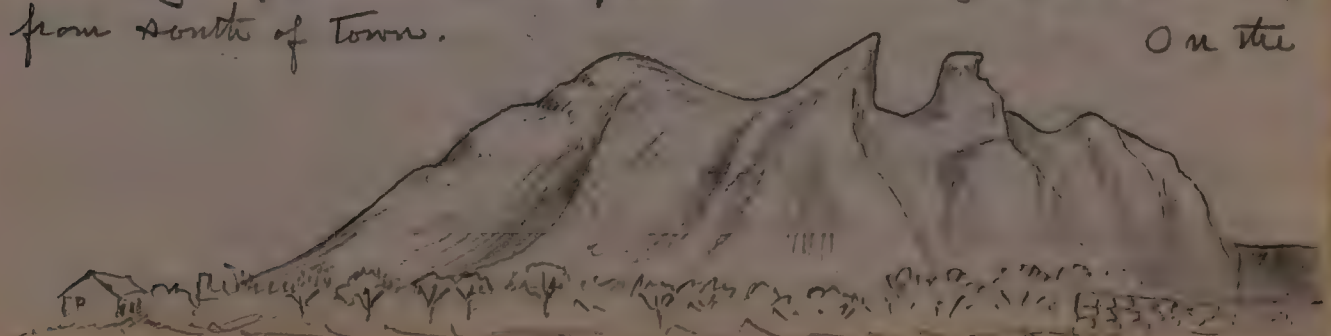
myself with several nice, round stones and proceeded, I surrounded on every side. Finally one big fellow and the leader got too near for comfort and I let him have it, the stone passing over his back and breaking his tail, so that it hung down, and such a howling I never heard. He let me go. Some and the whole pack followed suit. Lights dance on the hills, the lights of the town look very pretty. They say it is actually dangerous to wander around here after dark, that is for an American who they may suspect has money but I guess it is all right — if the Smith and Wesson is handy. I came down the Mt. to a high road & had company in to town, a dark skinned fellow who kept insisting that I show him my collecting bottles &c. and every now and then wanted to know the time, I imagine he would like to have stolen the watch and in the dark he couldn't have told whether it was silver or gold. But I kept thinking how much like a pig-pen box he'd look when I got done emptying my guts into him. We didn't converse fluently, he didn't know a word of English. About all I could say to him was, "Mucho grande", pointing to the Mts. afterwards to the sunset &c. and also "palmeto Mexicana many bonito" when showing him my butterflies in the collecting box. To all of which he answered "Si" and about

Some more words that were all Greek to me. I hired a shiftless white man to get some horses where he said he could, giving him a dollar. No horses for three days, then he came back with excuses and wanted more money. One of the R.R. men told me the town was dead and he got wind of it and came around to the Rodkey house where I was and tried to start a row. The R.R. man left like a dead dog and was scared to death, and I came in while the shiftless one was fooling his time that he said for his man who called him a "liar". So I told him I had paid the man and ordered him out at the end of the Smith + Wesson, and Mrs Rodkey told me I did right. (Mrs Rodkey's little adopted daughter, 12 years old, pure Spanish, speaks German, English and Spanish fluently, it is interesting to hear them change from one to the other, she talks German with the old lady.

I went to the bull-fight. The enclosure is very large, made of unpainted lumber, arena fashion, thirty rows of seats rising back as they go back. The ring has a high board fence, or rather planks like racks, a foot apart, with narrow solid partitions in the places in front so that a man can step behind it and escape from the bull.

The fight was cruel, barbarous, wicked, but exciting. It was conducted quiet-like the Spanish bull fights are made about, from the precision at first of the fighters, through all the wonderful feats of daring and skill, the final barbs planted in the bulls shoulders, the blindfolded horses bearing the picadors, the silk dressed toreadors with their long scarlet cloths flaunted in the bulls face, the matadors with his cloth and sword and the dying, struggling bull in the end, dragged out by mules. One bull gored a horse horribly, another lifted horse and rider clear of the ground, on his horns, another fought so desperately and viciously that hardly a toreador could stay in the ring and the matadore could hardly stab the beast with safety to himself. Throughout it all I felt most sympathy for the bull, next to the poor inoffensive horses. No right minded people would indulge in such a disgrace as this, and as a national and well-received sport, popular with nearly all classes. I entered the bull-fight enclosure and found a seat looking out over the Mts, the saddle back mountain looming up directly in front. A rough sketch below, from south of Town.

On the



other side on end of the town is the Sierra de la Silla or Bishops cap Mts. The sketch is not very good, but not too steep. The top is of course inaccessable, I do not understand the vertical walls which all around it and are several hundred feet high, though they do not look that high from the valley. To the west of the town are great dam tooth ranges of Mts. the tops with numerous vertical precipices in places. The Mt views are truly fine and grand; at a distance the Mts look as if covered with moss and they look much nearer than they are said to be, because of the air. Almost everywhere around Monterey, along all the roads, by paths &c. one comes across crosses cut or painted on trees or stones, most often on the trunk of a large yucca. These crosses are said to denote the death of some one by violence, a murder. They seem to be frequent. I dont want to have any crosses cut on my account. About a week before I arrived a man visiting here from the U.S. was killed by highwaymen. He had left his watch, money &c. at the hotel Iturbide and was returning from a walk about the country. He had spoken before of having been followed. He was a Yankee, they threw a rope over his

shoulders or neck from a horse and then dragged him. Pretty much the same as hanging a rustler, only horizontally. I believe the fellow are making a fuss over it, they ought to. But I suppose he wasn't armed. I can't quite understand how anyone could get much scared by these fellow. There may be bold, bad ones on the rampage now and then, but judging from what I have seen across they don't look like dangerous fellow. I saw a company of soldiers, marching. They were dressed in white, with Remington rifles. Somehow they didn't impress me much. Half a dozen good Americans would clean 'em all out, I reckon. There is really much in this life in Mexico, or in the life one could really live here with a little means, to attract one, the fine air, the tropical vegitation, the freedom from restraint. But the people, the natives, are hardly attractive, they have odd customs that are not desirable. There is no freedom between the sexes, the lover never sees his inamorata alone, the people look out of their houses through iron bars, the restraint in some things is not consistantly followed in others, the young women and girls go in bathing in the arroyo de agua, on the outskirts of the town and in plain sight of everyone passing, and they wear either a short skirt from the waist to half way to the knees or else nothing at all, and they don't seem to mind it. We got some black looks from natives as we stood

on one of the three hedges watching them. Some
real pretty young girls, perhaps 15 or 20 years
old, sporting around like water nymphs. I
got acquainted with the representative in north
western Mexico of the associated press, Mr
Woodall, a middle aged, jolly, kindly but
shrewd fellow. He took me around a lot and
we became good friends. Declared he
would write to me after I go home. Another
chap, young Frank Cameron, son of the
biggest mine holder in Campeche, and a
lively boy. He is seeking diversions of any
sort to drive away ennui. Chinese, and
pretty spanish girls, seems to be his main
hobbies. Returning from this delightful picture
I fell in with three Mexicans, two girls, one old
poorly dressed woman and a beautiful young
girl who walked very demurely along. Cowards
raved and I suggested the present himself;
to which he agreed. His attempts of such
an attempt, whereupon a bet was negotiated
between him and me as to the possibilities of
the scheme and I went forward and politely
accosted the old girl, walking beside her and
making queries in English about the flowers &c.
She didn't know English and looked like Spanish
but I glanced boldly at the girl, said, "ah,
buena, bonita, mucho grande, mi'cita?" and
slipped half a dollar in the old woman's hand

which she looked at very lovingly and then at once discreetly, making eleven of quiniece at me behind the young girl's back, walked out more rapidly ahead and I followed her for a ways and tried to say a lot to her in my awful Spanish and English and I don't believe she understood a word and she was exceedingly bashful, but I got a number of glances from her fine black eyes and a smile or two direct and knowing. Now the last I made my profound bow and "gracias, señorita, buenos dias", I left her and went back to the Imperial and rejoined Cannah. Playing billiards in the Hotel Iturbide with Cannah and a chap from Chicago named Donnell. Donnell came in to the bar and not seeing us took a drink and [illegible] from the table. He was already pretty well loaded. Right away he got into an altercation with a Spaniard, a fine, tall, elegantly dressed fellow, about pronouncing English words and Donnell laughed at him for talking his R's in saying "allright" and other words. It was laughable at first and we danced with the game to listen, until finally, the Spaniard got mad and showed it and shook his finger in Donnell's face and instantly, quicker than anything I ever saw done, Donnell had his gun out, a short barrelled Colt's I think, and sticking it into the Spaniard's face he backed him clear out of the bar room. Cannah and

Dawson, stood at their tracking line on the
bank got down under the Second Table, but
I guess I was green, anyway. I was too
much interested to dodge, and somehow the
accident didn't look very dangerous to me
so I stood up and looked on. They laughed
at me afterward about it but somehow I
thought the laugh was on them. I
got a donkey who drove a hack and did
teaming and with a horse each we rode
to the Post, toward the saddle back, my
intention being to climb it. On the foot
miles journey from the town then it looked,
we found a Swedish family, an old
couple with two fine looking boys, the
eldest about 20 and I engaged him to guide
me up the Pass. We filled ourselves, ate
a big meal of tortillas and chile-con-carne,
and with blankets, well gun stocked
we started it two in three miles further
on till the account began in earnest, but
we stopped at a small brook for water
and the girl sitting in the doorway was a
beauty, magnificent eyes, perfect features, low
broad hair worked, two dress open in front
down to her waist, one shoulder and breast
bare and bare footed. But as we drew
near to receive the drink I saw her hair
was simply covered with the white nits of

head high. It was hot and dragging. We struck a donkey trail, that people got around from the mountain fastness, and we went along and up at a lively rate. The donkey is a powerful beast, good natured and intelligent and Spanish Spanish fluently and the Mexican is wiry, quick, active and very fine looking; he don't speak English, so the donkey was my interpreter. We talked little Mexican and were soon away up the Mt. at the end of the donkey trails. Where the Mexican was beyond his ken, he had never been further up and was at a loss how to proceed. But I didn't care to send him back and so we all proceeded. I selected a long continued high ridge that led toward the highest peaks as near as I could see and we mounted this ridge and continued along the narrow rocky crest. The going was awful, rocks, boulders, small precipices to get up & around, tropical growth, thorn bushes, huisache, mesquite &c, Spanish daggers. Thorny vines tangled and barred across our path and impossible to get through, then little glades of open ground and groves of stunted growth. By evening we had climed half way up the mountain, or more, and we made camp where it was a little level and we could see out over the dot bearing valley and up to the lower point,

the [illegible] side of the saddle and across the great mountain like ridge that saddles up to the [illegible]. We made a meal of the hearts of a low palmetto fan and had sort of macaroni very soft and tarantulas and [illegible] were crawling about everywhere in the ground. I could have saddle management so many, in places. The Mexicans with their flint and steel, started a fire and then set ablaze the [illegible] trunks of a great Spanish dagger in front of the camp and it blazed up like a great torch, the flames leaping their feet above the trees. Tarantulas, they came from everywhere and we were busy killing them and the loose rotted bark of the yucca, or rather of the lace work of the leaves that die & hang down year after year about the stem, was full of tarantulas and as it burned these nasty things dropped down to the ground to be burned by the cinders and burning grass. Finally the flames died down and the spiders seemed to have all disappeared, and we lay down after eating and tried to sleep. I wondered if the fire was seen in Monterey. I wondered if numerous tarantulas were gathering around my pate and if a movement by me would precipitate an attack, the beasts have a way of jumping at one enemy that is not pleasant. I wondered

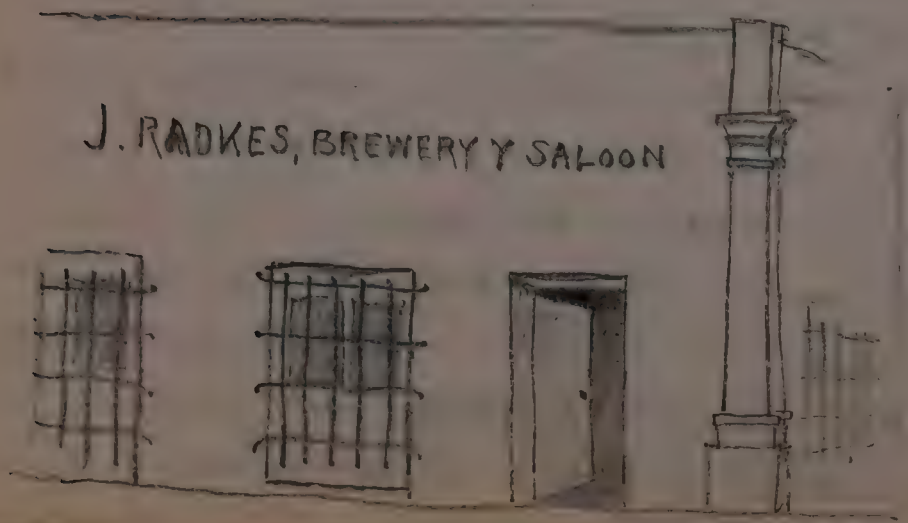
if my companions were sleeping and I found they were. I wondered if the Mexican would correct my revolver to the extent of letting me a clip when I dozed. But I had shown him when it was still light how I could hit a log at some distance nearly in the center and I hoped he would respect that. And I had left my money and watch at Monterey and had told him, through the donkey, that he would have to return to the town with me for his pay, $2. a fortune to him. I did go to sleep but when I waked up I found the Mexican's black eyes wide open and staring at me. Somehow it made me uncomfortable. The donkey slept like the dead and didn't wake till morning, I guess, but I only dozed through the night in fits, yet I awoke refreshed, when it was still only gray. The Mexican got up soon after and lighted a fire, a small one this time. The air was chilly. As it grew lighter we could see the valley dimly but clouds partly hid it. Looking across the gorge I saw two black animals coming down a naked part of the ridge and when they emerged from the timber fence I could see they were bears. They were entirely black and seemed rather small at the distance. A fog seemed to be gathering about us and blowing from somewhere and it obstructed the view of the distant mountains

and the valley. We turned to get one last look at the valley, and looking the water in the eastern bowl pretty wide. Presently a succession of dense clouds came from somewhere, shutting off the Chief, more Mattoon, and the east. I turned them to look out over the valley, and the pitiful sight met my eyes nearly took my breath and power away. The clouds had lowered until a mere strip as far as the eyes could reach, had settled & covered the earth, and only the blue tops of the distant mts. showed through and above it; the lower hills were beneath it. It was like a great white billowy ocean, with blue mt. top islands, grand, magnificent beyond words. I was conscious of salt water and the Mexican Pat on still was a-moaning, saying only "Muy bonita, muy grande" over and over, and even the Lethargic darkey exclaimed "Lordy, Lordy, this grand." It was hard to get away from, to look away from, one could drink in such a sight as long as it could last, but the more important business ahead of us called us and laboriously we took up our way again up the mt. But now the going was frightful, the vegetation and the boulders were well nigh impassable and often running out of water we came to a

stop, apparently half a mile below the summit. I led the way all the time urging the others, who lagged dreadfully. "When one wants to climb a Mt. anywhere or anyhow, leave guides behind, they are a nuisance, eat more grub than they are worth, don't know how to save water, d—n 'em. Had I come alone I should have had no trouble reaching the top and with plenty of grub. But now out of grub and water I could not attempt to go on and the donkey wouldn't. The Mex. wanted $5. to continue. The donkey said no money would tempt him to go up "gringo" and get lost and die. And so we turned back and commenced the descent, part of the time hunting for water and getting a little in pitcher plants and further down the Mt. where we again struck the tropical vegetation, out of the horizontal, trough shaped leaves of the cantuna plants. The donkey was nearly killed over a precipice the edge of which we traversed for a long distance, but he grasped a stout branch by the tips of his fingers and saved himself. I never saw a gray faced colored man before and naturally he is as black as they make 'em. After a long time we reached the donkey trail again, came down the rest of the way very quickly and sat down to supper at the home of the

Mar. 4 Sunday. Tortillas and eggs fried in grease, plenty that we have. Lounging. Then we rode to town and I took a good bye to Dona Concepcion. The next afternoon I went to the bull fight, again and was pasted on every side, the whole town having seen the fun on the 3rd. The bull fight was just like the others only perhaps less bloody, the matadore was from the City of Mexico and understood his work perfectly, poor toro didn't get much a chance when he went after them. Monday I took train back for Corpus again, having already spent two small days just on this account, seeing sights.

At Penitas on the Texas, Corpus road, the dust blew so thickly in the high wind that distant objects appeared like in a fog. Whitsett started a village in this God-forsaken hole I can't see.



General idea of my boarding house, no longer used as a saloon. From a dim sketch. Said to be best place in Monterrey to put up reasonably. I believe it.

Aug 23. Last trip with Prion. Nueces River bottoms, former camping
to place. No blossoms or flowers; everything dead and dry.
28th. A small creeping plant in moist places along the
bayou, with small white flowers, attracts bees, butterflies
&c. what there are of them. Snipped but without much
success; a few battered moths. It is evident
that few chrysalides hatch during this dry season,
they suffer from moisture as well as the vegitation.
Saw a turkey buzzard eat the entrails of a rabbit
poisoned for coyotes and then fly off unconcerned to
a tree stump and then eventually sail heavenward
not the least worse for its highly seasoned repast.
Came across a small calf that the old mother cow
had hidden as usual and had been discovered
by a coyote, a small beast very light gray in color.
I came up through the long grass from the windward
side and the coyote didn't scent me. It was
jumping at the calf and I was just attracted
by the fracas in the long grass. But the calf
met every attack with lowered head and the
wolf had to give it up. So it ran off and disappeared
but stopped to look back from time to time
and I waited silently. Finally becoming tired
with my perch on a high mesquite stump I was
about to get down when the fracas again started
and looking, there were two wolves, the second one
much larger and darker in color. They would
have pulled the poor calf down quickly, indeed they
had sprung upon it and it was bellowing in a

moment, but I looked in and heard the wolves nearly daily. Though I had only my revolver and could not hit them running, one went one way, one another and they went in a hurry, as coyotes can go. The elk then moved one with its head, quite convinced that it had itself conquered the foes and that I was another and I collected what fire there all over came back and she would walk no doubt and was excited and wanted to play with me but I didn't.

Saw a peregrine falcon overtake a duck. Bird were soaring over Dewe Marsh lake but I hardly noticed that. After that I stalked some ducks and the hawk dropped out of the sky like a stone, caught itself on short wings, went past me with the velocity of a cannon ball and overtook the fast-flying ducks almost instantly, striking at but missing one of them because the duck did this flycatcher act and dived, quite well for a duck. I think they were bald-pates.

bird soaring

bird diving to earth

I could hardly have believed the bride could have been so quickly overtaken by anything on wings, and the speed of the hawk was wonderful, when it passed me I could not have told it was a bird.

bird passing near ground

bird rising to duck

bird striking at duck.

Standing on driftwood between the bayou and main river, a large island two miles long covered by forest, palmetto and the whole upper end treeless and crossed with ten thousands of cords of drift. I happened to see moving beneath me something that at first had seemed like a large branch but that now I saw was a giant snake, beautifully pied and mottled. I didn't see its head but stood watching it for sometime until it had disappeared among the drift, and I will swear that the body at its thickest part was at least 7 inches in diameter, though not round and from its thickest part to its tail it must have been ten or twelve feet long. I was surprised, excited I'll admit and completely off my head, otherwise I would have taken twine and a stick, tried to uncover its head and capture it. Had I tried to hold down the body I think the head would have come back, but I suppose the beast could have put up a scrap and I would not have got a perfect specimen. I believe there must have been a boa, ranging this far north. Coyotes very common about. Every night they serenaded me, howling like the dead had come to life and shooting toward them only quieted them a little while. Prom saw a panther watching Blacke and Brown tethered near the bottom timber. The beast ran at his approach and when he went back

with the remainder of our force and he could not find it. Then I took a shot for it but it must have been out from California or Patagonia by the time I got in the game. Heard me swearing real loud and didn't want to scare me. Returning we went across the mesquite and cactus country toward Rodgers Tank and on the way Flora showed excitement in a motte, coming back to the wagon with hair on end and our coyotes or cattle evident. Prince and I jumped down and went over to the motte and there sat an ocelot, on a low limb, looking too pretty for anything and as I had expected a snake and had brought no gun Prince shot the beast and I took the skin, but it was spoiled by bugs before reaching Corpus. Got two rattle snakes also, the live also, head, fangs and all, fine too, but these were also ruined by beetles. In the same box with the cat skin. Too bad! We ran into Julian Prince's cattle camp north of Rodgers Tank and that good fellow danced a jig when he saw us. Then he begged John to help him round up about 2000 cattle; he was short of men and didn't know what to do and the cattle were restless, being all young stock and hungry as alligators. So I

remained to keep the ranch in repair for a week and John Prior went to work at the round up. Indian expected about 1000 more head and were going to drive through to San Marcos or Houston and ship. I never enjoyed myself better. There were eight of us, 6 cowboys and a Mexican cook and I. I went up to the lake one mile away; a mile long body of water and shot ducks, geese, Plover &c. and got two wild Turkey on the roosts with Prior and shot a lot of quail, plover, curlew, cottontail rabbits and tried for antelope and deer on horseback but without success. In the afternoons when the men off duty had had their naps and the cattle were quiet we played poker for stakes and chips, told stories, pitched quoits, matched pennies shot at a mark and had a jolly time generally. One of the boys was a graduate from a college in Michigan. When the drive commenced I said good bye to this outfit with genuine regret. Returning to Corpus met Theodore Prior who was going to the ranch after some horses and he begged John to go with him & returning with us we unloaded and John started off, bidding me a final good bye from the wagon. The last I saw of him and old Black & Brown and Flora was as they disappeared over the

prairies in a cloud of dust, John waving his hand to me as long as he could. I knew he was affected; I was moved. That combination of horses, wagon, dog and the man, and of the best fellow that ever trod the green earth is hard to beat and have meant many pleasant days for me. One of the most generous of men, kind, jolly, good natured, polite, a fine hunter and shot, a keen observer and a good friend. Now to pack up and get back to Philadelphia. I shall again visit the Mts. and hunt, stop at San Francisco and collect a little, then for home.

The combination, rough but picturesque.